

THE BATTLE IN THE WHITE PLAGUE'S LAIR

How the Nurse of the Double Red Cross Hunts Through the City's

Slums Helping Victims of Tuberculosis in Their Fight for Life.



Every third person in the United States who dies between the ages of 15 and 45 years, dies of tuberculosis. There are 1,000,000 persons in the United States today suffering from that disease. Every year 200,000 persons in this country are killed by the white plague.

Quite an array of statistics, isn't it? If an invading army marched across the United States killing right and left and showing no mercy to women and children, an awful howl would ascend to Congress demanding more battleships and armies. Every able-bodied man would fly to arms.

But because the tuberculosis germ is only one-tenth of an inch long we pass him by with little attention. That's why the nurse of the double red cross gets a job. In every large city of the United States and in many of the smaller ones these nurses are fighting for the prevention and relief of tuberculosis.

Their work chiefly is among those who are unable to pay for the services of a physician. Many of those they deal with resent interference. They don't want to believe they are in the grip of the tiny monster. Living carelessly as they do, ignorant of the menace they are to society, they spread the disease to others and add to the annual death toll of the cities.

The nurses of the double red cross work under the auspices of the Anti-Tuberculosis societies of the city in which they are employed. A newspaper reporter in St. Louis started out one morning to trail a nurse and see the work she did. Here are some of the things he saw.

Early in the morning a telephone message came into the headquarters of the anti-tuberculosis society saying:

"There's a man down here that

looks as though he had tuberculosis. He takes no care of himself and takes no care to keep the disease from spreading to others."

A nurse was detailed to go to the address given and try to find the man. The reporter followed. To reach the home she had to pass through a long dark hallway in a tenement house in order to get to the rear of the building where the man lived. The nurse's entrance to the house was blocked by the man's wife. She wanted no one interfering with her affairs.

He was careless, ignorant and irresponsible. He was too weak to work and the family lived on the earnings of the wife who ought to have been out of doors or in a hospital. The city ordinance provides that persons ill of tuberculosis can be sent to the City Hospital whether they want to go or not, but the ordinance does not provide they can be kept there.

The sick man was sent to the hospital, but in five days he was back. The nurses kept after the family showing them how to keep clean and instructing the man of the house how to take care of himself so as not to spread the disease. The family did not like the interference, so they moved. The nurses followed them, trailing them from place to place. Everywhere they went the nurses would insist on cleanliness. They forced the family to obey the sanitary laws for the protection of others. The family moved eighteen times in ninety days trying to evade the nurses, but the nurses of the double red cross would not give up. Several times the family were lost for a few days, but they were always found again living in ignorance and carelessness. Eighteen times the nurses fumigated their homes and finally the head of the house gave up.

"I'll go to a hospital," he said.

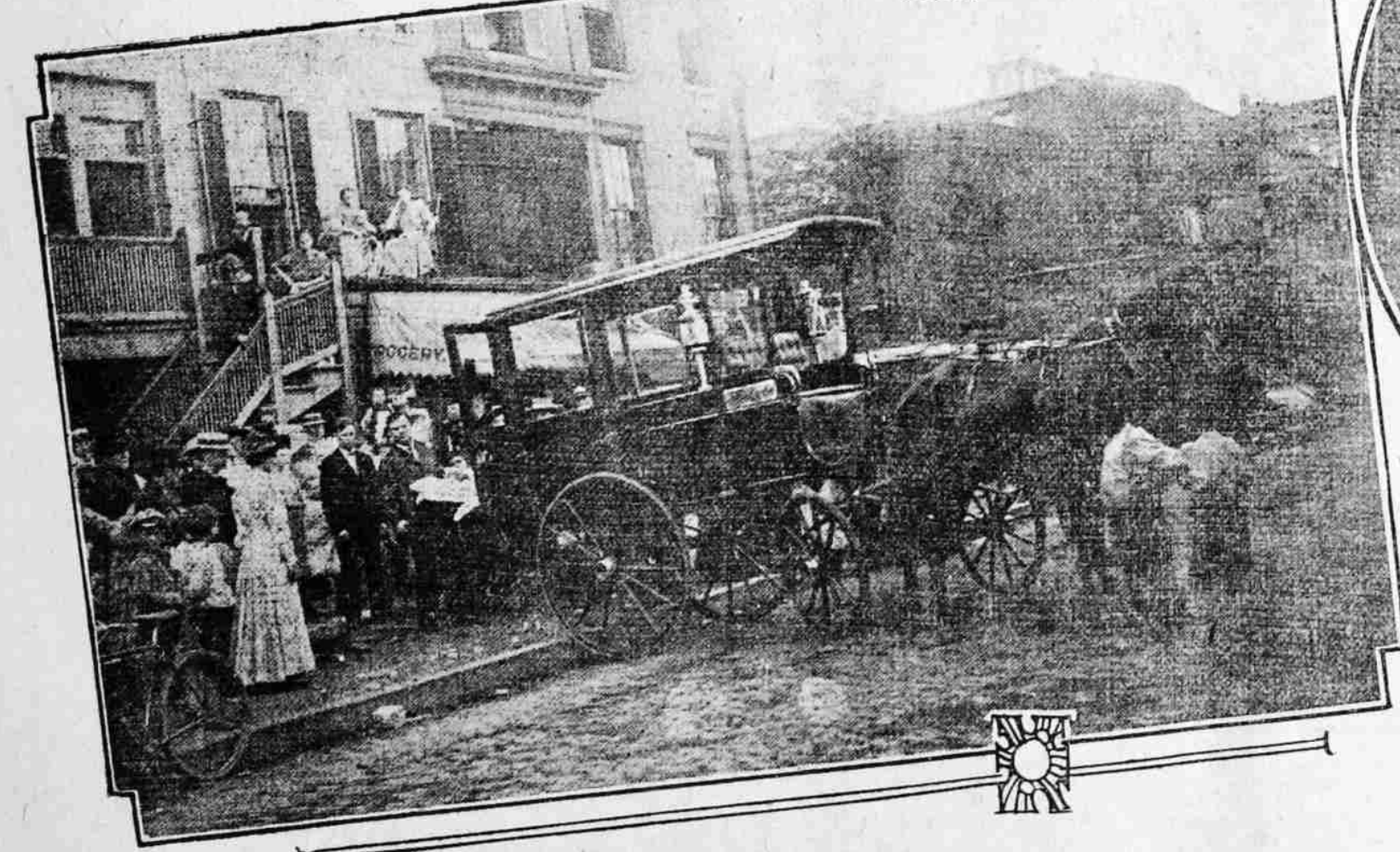
He was sent to Koch Hospital, where he would not be a menace to others. His wife was sent to the State Hospital for Incipient Consumptives, where the disease was arrested. The baby was sent to the Children's Hospital, where he was given a chance to live.

All day long the reporter followed the nurse and the further he went the more impressed he became with the idea she was earning all she got and more, too. The nurse visited many regular patients. Most of them were glad to see her and accept her advice. She taught how to be clean and prevent the spread of disease to others. She taught that it is only the careless consumptive that is a menace to

others. The one who takes proper care of himself does not do any harm. She taught how to sleep at night with windows wide open and showed how to fix window tents so they could sleep with their heads out of the windows. Where it was possible she had them buy screen wire and build a sleeping porch. She showed them how to prepare food so as to build up their bodies and throw off the disease and told them what food to eat.

There are many throughout the city who are constantly giving tips to the Society for the Prevention and Relief of Tuberculosis, telling them when they find consumptives who are violating the laws of health and spreading the disease. The nurses quickly go to prevent further increase of the disease germs.

These tips often are indefinite.



Deaths Per 100,000 From Tuberculosis

St. Louis	132.0
Chicago	157.8
London	159.2
Boston	161.9
New York	177.1
Philadelphia	111.7

The tipster can tell only the locality where the victim was seen and the nurse goes to the spot and from there makes inquiries. Sometimes the consumptive escapes and continues to spread the disease germs. FINDS GIRL MISINFORMED BY HER PHYSICIAN.

On one of these trips a nurse found a girl that seemed to be in the second stage of the disease. When questioned by the nurse she learned the doctor had said the case was bronchitis.

"Go and ask the doctor if you

have tuberculosis," directed the nurse. The girl did as instructed and the doctor admitted she had the disease. He said he had not told her because he did not wish to frighten her.

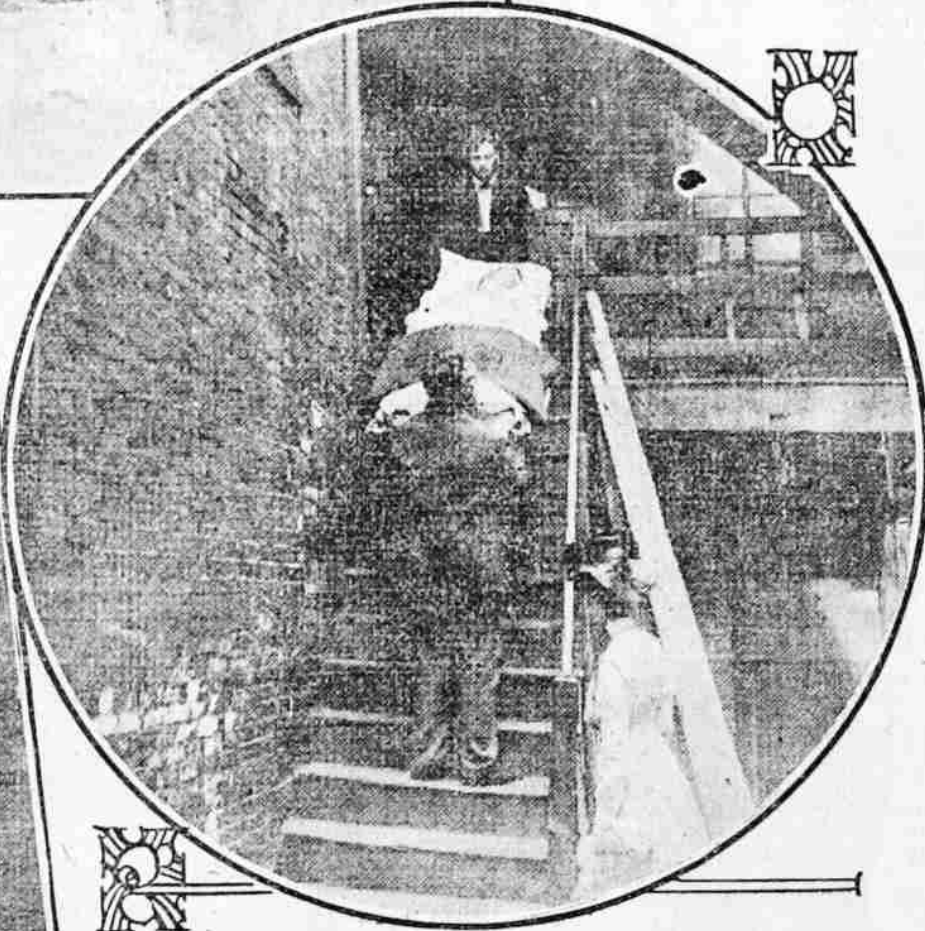
After the girl gave the doctor a scolding for his treatment of her she applied to the society for aid. Aid was given at once and the disease arrested.

A tuberculosis patient in a levee restaurant was reported. The nurses visited it and found the place in a most unsanitary condition; the patient was a cook and proprietor, and at the time of the first visit was cutting sandwiches with unclean hands and selling them to his boarders. Whites and negroes were habits of this place, twenty-four of them sleeping in the same room with the proprietor. The man was examined and the report was positive. The patient became angry and stated he did not have tuber-



UPPER left: Group of anti-tuberculosis nurses. Upper right: Two views of a nurse hunting for victims of the white plague to stop the spreading contagion to others. Center: A basement home with only one window, tuberculosis thrives here. Below: Two views of a nurse directing the removal of a patient from a tenement house to the hospital.

nary food given the poor by charitable organizations and then, too, when the patient is first reported it needs nutritive food quickly.



closus and that he would be examined by his own physician. This was done, the patient giving the wrong specimen and the report therefore was negative. The patient was sent to the city clinic, two examinations were made and the specimens were positive. The man was compelled to cease operating his restaurant on account of its unsanitary condition and because of his being a menace to others.

Another striking instance is that of the tamale vender. Several cases of tuberculosis have been located in the homes of these vendors. Once a man having his plant in a small room, used the shucks in which the tamales are encased for a bed for his dog. A dirty wash basin was used as a mixing pan and in various other ways the manufacturing establishment was beyond question the most unsanitary imaginable. He had an infected finger and his wife cancer. When able to sell his wares he claimed he had a lucrative business. With the co-operation of the Health Department and the Food Inspector this man has stopped making tamales.

MUCH MONEY NEEDED TO CARRY ON WORK.

Tuberculosis work needs more money than any other charitable undertaking. To separate the patient from the family more room is needed, a bed and bedding is necessary; the rent is increased and as they already are paying all they can afford it is impossible, many times, to carry on the work of prevention successfully. The tuberculosis patients cannot eat the ordi-

Without a relief fund this food is often impossible to obtain.

The Society for the Relief and Prevention of Tuberculosis is supported by voluntary contributions entirely. Money is given by people of means, and there is an income from the sale of Christmas stamps and from the collection of old papers and magazines.

The means for fighting the disease is wholly inadequate in every city. Some cities have advanced further than others. The annual damage in the United States from the disease is half a billion dollars a year in loss of life and labor due to the attack of the White Plague.

When a man is stricken with leprosy he is taken away from society and isolated in a cabin. Doctors say tuberculosis is more infectious than leprosy, but we pay little attention to isolating for tuberculosis. Tuberculosis, however, is entirely preventable disease. It is never inherited. It is acquired. In 1882 Dr. Robert Koch in Berlin discovered the germ that causes the disease. It is a vegetable growth red shaped and only 1,100,000 of an inch in thickness. Growing in the body it destroys the tissues and produces poisons.

The commonest form is tuberculosis of the lungs, called consumption. It lodges in the digestive organs and in the bones also. The germs are present in the air almost all the time because of the carelessness of those who have the disease. It thrives in dark corners where ignorant men expectorate. When it dries the germs float through the air and are inhaled, reaching the

lungs where they find lodgment. To a person in vigorous health there is no harm done from inhaling the germs. But to the persons whose system is run down by overwork, poor food, lack of sleep or other disease, the little germs often mean death.

WEAKENED BODY UNABLE TO THROW OFF DISEASE.

The weakened system is unable to throw off the disease and it grows rapidly destroying the tissue.

Under proper care tuberculosis can be cured in the early stages. The conditions which caused the disease must be removed.

Experts in the treatment of tuberculosis have prepared the following statement:

"Transient unskilled laborers are great disseminators of tuberculosis.

Cheap lodging houses are hotbeds of tuberculosis and should be kept under strict inspection.

"One tuberculosis dispensary in a large city is not sufficient.

"All factories should receive careful inspection; light, air-space and ventilation regulations should be established and enforced.

"All those employed in cooking and serving food in public places should receive medical inspection.

"Excessive use of alcohol and tobacco are important predisposing agents.

"Home life is antagonistic in some degree to the dissemination of tuberculosis.

"The great practical importance of educational measures is evidenced by the overwhelming fact that over half of our cases had never received medical attention nor advice before applying to the clinic.

"We have found none of the newer methods of diagnosis as reliable as the old.

"Tuberculin skin tests in children are valuable aids in diagnosis.

"The ultimate cure of tuberculosis is economic.

"Rational preventive therapy must be based upon educational and economic lines. We must treat those who have not contracted the disease.

"Hospitals for advanced cases should be of large capacity and as attractive as possible.

"There should be more free sanatoria subsidized by the State. Each State should have at least three or four such institutions.

"The visiting nurse is indispensable in the treatment of city cases. Philanthropic organizations are also necessary under present conditions.

"Though it is of utmost importance that advanced cases should be isolated in hospitals, it is not proper to force them into institutions through premeditated neglect.

"When patients are sent away from home without the assurance of further assistance, the results are usually disastrous.

"The class in tuberculosis is an ingenious and valuable idea, which is giving practical results.

"Tuberculin therapy is a valuable adjunct in the treatment of tuberculosis both in city and sanatorium practice, because not infrequently truly remarkable results are noted.

"Medical treatment is necessary in dispensary practice. Pronounced cases require symptomatic treatment. Most patient cannot be controlled without some form of medication.

Dean of American Poets.

John Townsend Trowbridge, the famous poet and author, celebrated his eighty-sixth birthday anniversary September 18, at his beautiful home in Boston. Many friends called during the day, and he received many letters and telegrams of congratulation. To a reporter he declared he felt as young as he did twenty years ago and gave an interview favoring votes for the woman who want them, but denouncing the methods of the militant suffragettes in England.

Mr. Trowbridge is the dean of living American authors, numbering among his early associates such literary stars as Emerson, Lowell, Longfellow, Whittier, Holmes, Whitman, and Artemus Ward. He is best known as a writer of boys' stories, but his poems and novels rank high. His poem about Darius Green has been frequently quoted since flying machines became a reality. He has written only two books in recent years.